

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 AID-05 DODE-00 H-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 IO-11 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2541

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0881

BOGOTA FOR VANCE, ARA FOR LUERS, S/NM FOR DUGSTAD, SER/INC
FOR WAMPLER, DEA FOR EOI CUSACK

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR MX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN MILITARY ROLE IN ERADICATION

REF A. LAPAZ 499, B. MEXICO 11470,

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE IS RESPONSE REF A, WHICH SOUGHT CLARIFICATION FOR SENATE STAFFER JORDAN OF POSSIBILITY OF GIVING MEXICAN AIR FORCE (MAF) ROLE IN POPPY ERADICATION. GIVEN NEAR-AUTONOMOUS NATURE OF MEXICAN SECY OF DEFENSE, AND FACT THAT LIMITED MAF ASSETS ARE NOW ASSIGNED OTHER MISSIONS, MAF ASSETS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE ASSIGNED TO ATTORNEY GENERAL. FURTHERMORE, OUR PUSHING FOR MAF INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGN WOULD PROBABLY ELICIT AN MAF/SECDEF REQUEST FOR U.S DONATION OF ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE MAF. IN VIEW OF AG'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOM NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM AND THE EXTENSIVE US ASSISTANCE ALREADY GIVEN TO HIM, WE BELIEVE ANY INCREMENT OF ASSETS SHOULD BE MANAGED BY HIM. END SUMMARY

2. FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS PREPARED BY DATT IN RESPONSE TO REF A, PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE JAN. 16, ON OFFICIAL TRAVEL:
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A. STATEMENT THAT "MEXICAN AIR FORCE WOULD LIKE TO BE GIVEN ROLE OF ERADICATING MEXICAN POPPY FIELDS" GOES BEYOND ACTUAL SUBSTANCE OF DATT'S DISCUSSIONS WITH MR. JORDAN. DATT DID DESCRIBE MAF SECDEF RELATIONSHIP AND POINTED OUT RELATIVE POSITION OF MAF AS SUBORDINATE TO MEXICAN SECDEF. NOTHING IS POSSIBLE WITHIN MEXICAN DEFENSE SECRETARIAT WITHOUT BLESSING OF VERY STRONG SECDEF. DATT ALSO DISCUSSED NATURE OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL RIVALRIES AND JEALOUSIES EXISTING BETWEEN MEXICAN AG AND SECDEF, AND POINTED OUT THAT PROBABLY RESOLUTION OF EXISTING OBSTRUCTIONS TO PROGRAM IN ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN RESTS WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT, SINCE MEXICAN SECDEF WOULD NOT RELEASE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF MAF UNITS TO AG UNLESS ORDERED TO DO SO.

B. FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH MIDDLE AND UPPER-MIDDLE LEVEL CONTACTS WITHIN MAF, IT CERTAINLY DOES APPEAR THAT THEY WOULD WELCOME A MEANINGFUL MISSION SUCH AS PARTICIPATION IN AVIATION-RELATED ASPECTS OF ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN. IN MAKING THIS POINT, DATT DID NOT IMPLY THEN NOR DOES HE FEEL NOW THAT THIS REFLECTS OFFICIAL MAF POSITION.

E. ADDITIONALLY, WE WOULD MAKE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. ON DEC. 29, 1975, DURING HIS ACAPULCO MEETING WITH AG LEVI AND AMB JOVA, OJEDA RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLY OBTAINING HELICOPTERS FROM OTHER GOM AGENCIES BY SAYING THAT ONLY HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE IN MEXICO BELONGED TO GOM ENTITIES. THESE SHIPS WERE USUALLY NEEDED FOR URGENT MISSIONS OR TO TRANSPORT HIGH RANKING ARMY OFFICERS OF OTHER GOM OFFICIALS, HE SAID, AND ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO CANNABALIZE OTHER GOM DEPENDENCIES TO SATISFY HIS NEEDS (REF B). TO PUT MATTER IN PERSPECTIVE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE MAF DOES NOT HAVE VERY EXTENSIVE HELICOPTER INVENTORY:
5 BELL 205 (NOT VERY SATISFACTORY FOR HIGH ALTITUDE WORK)
5 BELL 206
7 BELL 212 IN COUNTRY, WITH 8 ADDITIONAL TO BE DELIVERED LATER. THERE ARE ALSO 5 STOL AIRCRAFT, 20 ROCKWELL SHRIKE COMMANDERS AND 47 T-28 TRAINERS. (THE TWO LATTER CATEGORIES ARE NOT VERY PRACTICAL FOR OBSERVATION WORK.)

DATT NOTES THAT HELICOPTERS AND STOL AIRCRAFT
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ARE USED FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE, DISASTER RELIEF AND VIP TRANSPORT; AND SHRIKE COMMANDERS ARE USED FOR PROFICIENCY FLYING AND VIP TRANSPORT. WE BELIEVE AG WAS FRANK IN EXPRESSING HIS INABILITY TO PRY THESE AIRCRAFT LOOSE FROM THEIR ASSIGNED MISSION.

B. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE THAT ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART TO INVOLVE MAF IN AIR CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE POPPY FIELDS

WOULD MEET WITH MAF/SECDEF REQUEST FOR AIRCRAFT TO PERMIT MAF TO CARRY OUT THIS NEW ROLE. IN OTHER WORDS, WE BELIEVE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO BE CARRIED OUT USING US-SUPPLIED AIRCRAFT. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER THESE ARE TO BE UNDER CONTROL OF SECDEF/MAF OF AG.

C. PRES ECHEVERRIA HAS GIVEN AG RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING GOM MULTI-AGENCY ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT, INCLUDING ERADICATION CAMPAIGN.

USG HAS ALREADY SPENT SOME 25 MILLION DOLLARS, MOSTLY ON 9 FIXED AND 27 ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT FOR AG. ADDITIONALLY, AG IS BUILDING MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR HANGAR FACILITY IN MEXICO CITY TO HOUSE AND MAINTAIN THESE AIRCRAFT. IT WOULD SEEM LOGICAL, THEREFORE, THAT AG'S OFFICE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE LEAD AGENCY IN AVIATION OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS, AND THAT ANY INCREMENT OF ASSETS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HIM TO MANAGE.

4. ACTION: PURSUANT TO RECOMMENDATION REF A, DEPT MAY WISH TO DISCUSS FOREGOING WITH WILLIAM JORDAN, CHIEF OF STAFF, OF SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. THOMPSON

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